

VZCZCXRO8221  
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #0384/01 0361615  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 051615Z FEB 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9434  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000384

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2017

TAGS: [IZ](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: HASHIMI ON SUNNI SUPPORT FOR BSP, CABINET RESHUFFLE

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: The Ambassador gave VP Al-Hashimi a read out of his KSA trip on February 1, observing that continuing sectarian violence, the way Saddam was executed, and perceptions of increased Iranian interference appeared to have cost PM Maliki credibility with Iraq's Arab neighbors. Hashimi reported on his recent meetings with Sadrism bloc leader Baha Al-Ariji and NSA Muwaffak Rubbaie on establishing joint neighborhood security committees for mixed neighborhoods. While he agreed in principle to the committees, the GOI's public announcement of Tawafuq's acceptance was premature, Hashimi argued, since he had not yet a chance to consult within the bloc. Hashimi acknowledged that mobilizing Sunni support for the Baghdad security plan was a concern; he stated his commitment to playing a supportive role - if Maliki and others included him in its strategic planning and implementation. The Ambassador raised cabinet changes with the VP, noting that Maliki sought to appoint Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Rafaa Essawi as Minister of Health (MoH). The Ambassador urged Hashimi to work on a list of potential replacements for the Minister of State for Women's Affairs Mahmoud and DPM Zawbaie, who the PM was keenly interested in replacing. End Summary.

-----  
SAUDIS, EMIRATIS SKEPTICAL OF MALIKI  
-----

¶2. (S) While the Saudis and Emiratis support the Baghdad Security Plan in principle, the Ambassador told Hashimi, they appeared highly skeptical of PM Maliki's ability to rise to the challenges posed by the security situation in a fair and balanced way. It appeared that the PM has a great task ahead of him in regaining his credibility in the region, the Ambassador added. Hashimi said that all Iraqis shared this skepticism.

¶3. (S) The Ambassador said the Saudis were in a "wait and see mode" with the GOI, and it appeared they would not play a helpful role in the immediate future.

-----  
FORMING ALLIANCES  
-----

¶4. (S) Hashimi said that when he was in Jordan last (on his return from the UK, on/around January 18) he attended meetings organized by the Jordanians, Saudis and Emiratis on forming a bloc with Fadheela, Hewan, Iraqiya and Tawafuq. (Note: Hashimi was not certain whether the Fadheela representatives (especially Nadeem Jabari) had the support of Fadheela bloc leader Yaqoubi for this initiative. End note.)

-----  
HASHIMI ON SADRISM OUTREACH, BSP  
-----

¶5. (S) Hashimi commented on Abdel Aziz Al Hakim's recent statement condemning sectarian violence, noting it was the "first time" Hakim ever publicly acknowledged Sunni and Shia suffering. Hashimi said that Baha' Al-Ariji's recent claim to want to help Iraqi forces "be more positive" was not enough. He said that Ariji must condemn the massacres perpetrated by MOI forces. As a positive gesture, Hashimi continued, Moqtada Sadr should order that the families of kidnapped victims should be informed of where they can find the corpses. Hashimi argued that Sadr must go beyond "freezing" JAM forces - he must dissolve these gangs, and claim they are no longer part of the Sadrism current.

¶6. (S) Hashimi expressed support for the joint security committees idea "in principle." (Note: Baghdad PRT reports that CoR member Ayad Hammouri and high-ranking IIP advisor Naseer Al Ani represent IIP at meetings on the committees with the Sadrist. End note.) However, Hashimi continued, it is pre-mature to go public since he had not yet consulted with other Tawafuq bloc leaders on a unified position.

-----  
SUNNI SUPPORT FOR THE BSP  
-----

¶7. (S) Given that the Sadrists have cleverly come out in support for the new BSP ahead of everyone, the Ambassador observed, it would be important for the Sunnis to do the same. The Ambassador expressed concern over statements from Sunni bloc leaders like Khalaf Ullayan on the "anti-Sunni" Baghdad Security Plan. Hashimi said that mobilizing Sunnis is an area of concern. Hashimi said he would shoulder the responsibility of convincing the Tawafuq bloc leaders.

BAGHDAD 00000384 002 OF 002

However, he added, he must have an influential role in the planning and coordination of operations. He also said that the operations should be carried out with respect for human rights.

-----  
TAWAFUQ POSITIONS IN THE CABINET SHUFFLE  
-----

¶8. (S) PM Maliki had settled on Minister of State Rafaa Essawi as the next Minister of Health, the Ambassador told the VP, but Maliki had not yet received Tawafuq's proposed replacements for the Minister of State for Women's Affairs and the DPM Zawbai's slot. On Minister of State Mahmoud (VP Hashimi's niece), Hashimi acknowledged that her performance is lacking and that she should be replaced. He noted that he had spoken to Adnan Dulaymi about replacing DPM Zawbai, and while "Dulaymi did not say no, he has not yet said yes." If Zawbai is replaced, Hashimi insisted, his successor must be given greater security responsibilities.

¶9. (S) Hashimi argued that Minister of Defense (MoD) Abdul-Qadir poses a greater problem than DPM Zawbai; as such, any cabinet shuffle must include a new MoD. He described Abdul-Qadir as "unbelievably weak" and "a failure" who has destroyed the MoD. He said that General Muhan, the new Supreme Consultant of the MoD (replacing the VP's deceased brother Aamir Al Hashimi) simply passed over orders drafted by the PM for the MoD to sign.  
KHALILZAD